United Nations A/ES-10/PV.20

General Assembly
Emergency Special Session

Official Records

20th meeting
Friday, 19 September 2003, 10.50 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

The President: I declare the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian Territory resumed pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/11 of 5 August 2002, whereby the Assembly decided to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from the Member States.

In that connection, I should like to draw the attention of delegations to the following: document A/ES-10/237, which contains the letter dated 17 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations, in which he requested, on behalf of the States Members of the League of Arab States, the resumption of the tenth emergency special session; and document A/ES-10/238, which contains a letter dated 17 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, by which he also requested the resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

In keeping with the established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/240, which contains a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General, informing the Assembly that 13 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 5 (*continued*)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.12)

The President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 5, entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory".

In that connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/ES-10/L.12.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

The President: I call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine): We are very pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The head of the delegation of

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Palestine at this session will extend official congratulations to you at a later time.

Today, we face the twenty-sixth veto of the United States in the Security Council on the question of Palestine alone. We face the decision of the occupation force to "remove" the elected leader of a people without the Security Council being able to do anything. We face a Member State with an insane Government that daily violates the Charter of this international Organization and its resolutions, in blatant contempt of and direct challenge to the international community as a whole; all that with the support and protection of the super-Power. We are faced with the most oppressive military campaign undertaken by an occupying Power against an entire people, including a long series of war crimes committed under the pretext of combating terrorism. We face colonization of what remains of our Palestinian land since 1967, which has gone on for 36 years and constitutes the greatest war crime of contemporary history. This has gone on with the rhetorical opposition of some and the sincere opposition of others, without any of them being able to end it.

Are we going to do something to confront all this? Will the international community possess the collective will, in the absence of the will of the super-Power, to impose respect for international law and United Nations resolutions and to achieve even the minimal degree of justice? That is my deepest hope. However, I can state that our Palestinian people, along with the millions of the people of the region, have begun to lose hope and confidence in the usefulness of all this.

We come today believing in the collective will of the Member States, which are united for peace. We come to deal with the situation resulting from the inability of the Security Council to fulfil its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security because of the exercise of veto by one of its permanent members during the Council vote on 16 September 2003 on the draft resolution. That draft was aimed, inter alia, at preventing the Israeli threat to the safety of the President of the Palestinian National Authority, and thus at preventing grave consequences.

We express our gratitude and appreciation to you, Sir, for your response to the request of the Arab Group and the Non-aligned Movement to resume the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly. We also express our thanks and appreciation to all countries that will try to remedy what occurred in the Security Council.

On 11 September, threats by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people and its leadership reached an unprecedented level with the decision by the so-called Israeli Security Cabinet to remove Yasser Arafat and to request the Israeli army to draw up a plan for his expulsion from his land and country. That was followed by statements by Israeli officials, affirming that killing President Arafat was an available option and other statements saying that the implementation of the Cabinet's decision would not take place now, but at a time to be determined by Israel. We strongly reject and condemn that as being illegal and insane, and we consider it an assault on Palestinian national dignity and the democratic choices of our people.

These threats prove once again the intentions of Mr. Sharon's Government to attack the Palestinian national leadership and to destroy our social economic conditions. Any implementation of Israeli threats will be considered terrorist acts that will lead to the end of the Palestinian Authority and the actual demise of the peace process.

We express our appreciation to most of the nations and organizations of the world for their firm and complete condemnation of the Israeli threats, and we call upon you to reaffirm this today with the aim of preventing and revoking those threats.

Indeed Mr. Sharon and his Government represent a threat to the stability of the region. They reject real peace and insist on the use of force and a military solution. Mr. Sharon has publicly said, for those who want to hear, that he does not want a lasting and permanent settlement but only seeks long-term transitional arrangements. The vision of Mr. Sharon, clearly, is the imposition of a number of walled and separate Palestinian bantustans confining the whole Palestinian people into less than half of the West Bank and slightly more than half of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians could find a way to connect these bantustans and call them a Palestinian State if they wish, while Israel keeps the rest of the Palestinian territory and continues its colonization and gradual annexation. We can add to all that the rejection of dividing Jerusalem between the two sides and the rejection of any rights of Palestinian refugees.

This is the truth, and everything Mr. Sharon has said or done has been in line with such a vision and in its service. That is why the expansionist wall is being built — to wall in the bantustans and to terminate any possibility for real settlement. That is also why settlement activities are continuing, including the legal transfer of Israeli settlers to our land. And that is why Israel continues its military escalation and destruction, and why it has worked so vigorously to reverse the situation to pre-Oslo conditions ten years later.

This political position comes after a bloody Israeli military campaign against our people, which has continued for approximately three years. During this time, it has inflicted horrific human and material losses among our people, to the extent that the humanitarian situation has deteriorated to a catastrophic level.

Throughout this campaign, the Israeli occupying forces have committed actions that are prohibited under the Hague Regulations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocol 1, including innumerable war crimes. They have committed acts of wilful killing, including extrajudicial executions, imposed collective punishments and committed wanton and unwarranted destruction of property and extensive destruction of infrastructure and homes. They have prevented the freedom of movement of humanitarian organizations, including United Nations agencies, and emergency rescue personnel, including ambulances. They uprooted crops and trees and razed thousands of dunums of agricultural land and imposed a siege and closure on all population centres. As they have committed all of the above, the occupying forces have used all types of heavy weaponry, including warplanes, helicopters and tanks.

The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and the parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court have a clear responsibility with regard to those who commit war crimes. We call on those countries to issue indictments and to bring to justice those Israelis who have committed war crimes against our Palestinian people. Foremost among those individuals are General Shaul Mofaz, the previous Chief of Staff of the Israeli army and the current Defense Minister, and General Moshe Ya'alon, the current Chief of Staff, and all the commanders of the Israeli military units that have committed war crimes. Throughout the years many crimes and massacres have been committed against the Palestinian people, from Deir Yassin to Kafr Qassem and Khan Yunis, and also those crimes that have been directly linked with an individual named Ariel Sharon — Colonel Sharon with the massacre of Qibya, Defense Minister Sharon with the massacre in Sabra and Shatilla, and Prime Minister Sharon with the massacre in the Jenin refugee camp. The international community must ensure that such crimes and massacres are not repeated.

As if these crimes are not enough, the Israeli Government is trying to depict all that has happened and is happening as if it were a battle against terrorism. What is painful is that some have accepted this and even have accepted Israel's hijacking of the world agenda to combat international terrorism to divert it in the direction of an open war against Arabs and Muslims in order to serve its narrow political interests. It seems that they have forgotten that Israel was the first to introduce terrorism to our region, from the assassination of United Nations mediator Count Bernadotte to the massacres of our people, from the sinking of the *USS Liberty* to the downing of a Libyan civilian aircraft and the bombardment of Arab civilian targets such as the Beirut airport, the Bahr al-Baqar school in Egypt and most of the Quneitra in the occupied Syrian Golan. There was the assassination of many Palestinian leaders and cadres in Beirut, Tunis and Europe, the deliberate bombardment of the United Nations building in Qana in southern Lebanon, and the threat to the safety and freedom of the elected Palestinian President. This list is too long and time is too limited to go further.

At any rate, we all are against terrorism. For our part, we have been very clear in our condemnation of actions committed by Palestinian groups in contravention of international law, specifically the suicide bombings that have targeted civilians in Israel. Moreover, we have constantly stated that those suicide bombings do not serve the national interest of the Palestinian people or the realization of their goals.

But matters do not begin or end here. The main issue is the Israeli occupation of our land and the settler colonialism of this land, and the rejection by Israel of our right to the State of Palestine and its national independence. Why do the Israelis not get out of our land? Then they can build all the walls they want on international borders. Why don't they at least stop the colonization of our land and the illegal transfer of colonial settlers to it?

It is important to note that the first suicide bombing occurred twenty-seven years after the onslaught of the occupation, after Israel had actually transferred three hundred and fifty thousand colonial settlers to the occupied Palestinian territory and settled them in more than two hundred settlements, and after it had declared the annexation of Jerusalem. Indeed, all this was done before, and not in reaction to, any suicide bombings.

Why are the Israelis, even after the beginning of the bombings, committing all this killing, destruction and war crimes? Does this benefit the battle against suicide bombings? And why has Israel committed all this systematic oppression and those crimes it did before that, and for more than a quarter of a century? What our people also do not understand is the readiness of some to quickly and enthusiastically condemn the suicide bombings, which kill Israeli civilians, but not — at least not with the same quickness and enthusiasm — the warplane bombings or the tank shelling, which kill Palestinian civilians in even greater numbers. This is not right, legally or morally.

In any case, these bombings must cease. Israeli war crimes and all other types of violence must cease as a way to end the occupation. This is the key to everything. If this occupation continues, the Israeli violence and crimes and violations will continue until the imposition of occupation is completed. The Palestinian violence will continue, whether the legal resistance against occupation or whether the illegal actions such as suicide bombings in Israel.

This is not our option or choice. We should completely give up violence and the logic of military solutions. We must rely on the political solution that restores hope, and we must return to the negotiating table. This is our option. We are also saying here that the road map should be revived and implemented in a real and honest way. But for this to happen, we cannot continue in the old way. It is high time to admit that the essential problem is the position of Israel that insists on colonization and settlement, rejects ending the occupation of the Palestinian land and fails to accept the independent sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Without changing that, there is no peace process and there can be no implementation of the road map or any other initiative. Such change, in turn, when it takes place, will open the road to the implementation by the Palestinian side of its obligations, including the cessation of all violence and provision of real security. It is high time to face reality, to stop covering the Israeli positions or running away from confronting those positions, while hoping that the process will continue to be alive, even if in appearance only. It is high time to stop inventing other reasons for the current crisis, such as the internal Palestinian situation or other issues, despite the importance of such issues.

At this time, it is incumbent on the international community and on us here at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to take the necessary measures to prevent the looming explosion of the situation and ensure that no harm will be inflicted on our President. Such measures must be taken in compliance with international law, to respect the national dignity of our people and their democratic choices and, finally, to preserve the option of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan to introduce draft resolution A/ES-10/L.12.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, it pleases and honours me to speak here as head of the Arab Group and to extend to you our heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I am fully confident that your great experience and capabilities will enable us to achieve the success we all desire.

The Assembly is meeting today in a special session on a matter on which many meetings have been held and many resolutions and condemnations have been issued over more than 50 years without restoring rights to their owners or without lessening Israel's arrogance or its expansionist policies or by forcing Israel to comply with Security Council and United Nations resolutions adopted against it. Israel is a usurping occupying Power that has practised all forms of brutality and destruction against the Palestinian people and persistently aborts all initiatives to find a political settlement, the last of which is the road map, which Israel has intransigently resisted since its announcement.

Israel has continued its consolidation of the occupation and the displacement of the Palestinian people by constructing a wall dividing up Palestinian territory. Israel did not stop there. It next announced a few days ago to the international community its sudden

decision to expel President Arafat from Palestinian territory. Such an action would cause an irreversible, qualitative change in the situation. The international community and its international Organization are entrusted with moving beyond rejection and condemnation to take a pragmatic, feasible approach resulting in action.

We have resorted to the Security Council, which faces a direct and great challenge in assuming its role and full responsibility on this issue. We look forward to decisive action to force Israel to renounce the horrible step that it has taken. But the Council was not able to adopt a resolution reflecting the will of the international community as expressed in the many statements delivered at its meeting. That was because the United States, as a Permanent Member, wished to make its will prevail over all members and used its veto power, preventing an initiative reflecting the unanimous will of the international community. It was very frustrating that the party that is supposed to be the honest broker in the peace process used its veto. The United States could have sent a positive signal to the peoples of the region and the entire world by supporting the truth contained in that draft resolution. Instead, it has chosen to interrupt the peace process through its blind support for Israel, encouraging that country to continue to flout the peace process, to continue its arrogance and to consolidate its occupation, injustice and brutality.

I speak before the Assembly as the last resort of a Palestinian people that continues to believe in the legality of the General Assembly and its leadership and continues to have faith in the positive response of the international community, which Israel flouts in contempt of all principles of international law, the stability of the region and the aspirations of the Palestinian people and Arab and Islamic peoples everywhere.

I would like to introduce before the Assembly draft resolution A/ES-10/L.12, which calls for the full cessation of all violent actions in the occupied Palestinian territories and calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from threatening the safety of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority and to express its support for the efforts of the Quartet, which is seeking to implement the road map.

I would like to point out that although this draft resolution has already been printed, the following States have since joined the list of sponsors: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Djibouti, Mauritania, Namibia, Pakistan and Senegal.

Israel, more than any other State, violates international law and legal norms. Its actions do not abide by any rules or laws. Israel's actions are more like the actions of gangsters. Israel, as it seems, will pursue its course despite the general objection of the international community unless the international community shoulders the responsibilities entrusted to it and works practically and seriously to stop Israel before it is too late.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): First, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly with such determination and vision. I would also like to pay tribute to the serious and impressive way in which you have prepared yourself for this important role.

At this week's opening of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, Mr. President, you boldly called for a forward-looking and action-oriented session to revitalize our work for the realities of a fundamentally changed world. Objectivity and not bias, you said, principal and not expediency — sentiments that have also been echoed by the Secretary-General in recent weeks. Such reform is critical if the United Nations wants to make a relevant and credible contribution to world affairs in the best tradition of the United Nations Charter.

Sadly, we convene today — just two days after setting out to embark on that important agenda — in order to consider an initiative that is fundamentally at odds with that goal, an initiative that relapses into the familiar preoccupation of the General Assembly with endless one-sided resolutions that have contributed little to the security and peace of Israelis or Palestinians.

At the beginning of this week, the Security Council debated, considered and ultimately rejected a resolution that would have come to the defence of a man who has devoted all of his energies to scuttling a long list of peace efforts now relegated to the dustbins of history — a man who has sought to sabotage the road map and prevent the emergence of a new and empowered Palestinian leadership, which was the basis of President Bush's vision.

Mr. Arafat's corrupt rule and his continuing support for and tolerance of terrorism have for decades caused untold suffering to both Israelis and Palestinians. His promise of peace and his rhetoric of reconciliation have been false, but his legacy of hijackings and suicide terrorism have become all too real and, tragically, all too global.

Almost 30 years ago, in 1974, Mr. Arafat stood here, at this very podium, and first addressed the General Assembly with a holster attached to his hip, and spoke of carrying a gun and an olive branch. Just two days ago, Mr. Arafat, while preaching to the Western media about his hopes for a new truce between Israelis and Palestinians, was quoted as saying to his supporters, "There is not one person in Palestine who does not dream of dying as a martyr."

It is very clear to us all that for all this time he has only taken the gun out of its holster and that the olive branch has really been a fig leaf to obstruct and hide his rejectionism. It may be Mr. Arafat who is the topic of this debate, but it is the cause of peace and the legitimate rights of Israelis and Palestinians that stand to suffer from continuing the pretence that Mr. Arafat is a legitimate leader.

Israel, more than any other State, invested a great deal in Mr. Arafat's word. We can no longer ignore his duplicity. The Israeli Cabinet's decision in principle merely states what world leaders have already recognized and what is effectively affirmed in the road map itself — that Mr. Arafat is an obstacle to peace. He represents the Palestinian's dark past rather than the bright future they could have. He is the region's and his own people's greatest tragedy.

Like so many other resolutions presented by the Palestinian side, this draft imagines an alternate reality where the brutal acts of terrorism that deliberately kill innocent civilians garner barely a passing mention. By failing to condemn expressly and forcefully the Palestinian leadership's abject refusal to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, this draft resolution, presented by the Palestinian representative, treats with disrespect the thousands of lives devastated by Palestinian terrorism. Are those lives not worthy of the General Assembly's protection?

By focusing criticism on the response to terrorism and not on the terrorism itself and its victims, the draft resolution becomes devoid of moral substance. By equating the deliberate murder of innocent civilians with targeted defensive operations against illegal combatants responsible for that murder, this draft resolution fails to provide us with a moral compass. The very first clauses of the road map expressly demand the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure of groups such as Hamas, Palestine Islamic Jihad and the Fatah Tanzim. Should not the failure of the Palestinian leadership to live up to this obligation take a prominent role in any fair and balanced assessment of the obstacles to peace?

There is more at stake today than another resolution to add to the litany of one-sided Palestinian initiatives that have been introduced in this Hall. What is at stake today is a choice about what kind of Organization we want the United Nations to be. Will the Assembly continue to tolerate the squandering of its precious resources on anachronistic and partisan agendas, at the expense of addressing, without selectivity, the myriad of important issues that concern the international community today? Will the Assembly surrender to efforts to manipulate its agenda to further the political interests of some, or will it activate its potential to show balanced and effective leadership in the interests of all?

Member States are no doubt aware of the millions of dollars already spent each year by the United Nations to advance the interests and positions of the Palestinian side to this conflict. More than 20 resolutions, many of them redundant, one-sided and hopelessly out of touch with reality, are adopted by the Assembly at every annual session. Investigative committees and other special bodies and representatives, including a whole division of the Secretariat itself, are largely manipulated to advocate and disseminate the Palestinian position, rather than to further the cause of peace for both peoples.

There is not one other country in the United Nations that is singled out for such discriminatory and one-sided attention. And to what end? Has the inordinate amount of time and number of resources helped bring the parties closer to peace and reconciliation, or merely intensified the acrimony between them? Has the message been forward-looking, positive and progressive, or bitter and divisive? And does the paper trail created by all this activity lead anywhere but to the conclusion that support and encouragement for peace between Israelis and Palestinians must be sought outside this Hall?

Knowing all this, do we really need, on the very eve of the general debate, to spend even more time engaged in an emergency special session that violates the very conditions of the Uniting for Peace procedure? Do we really need to consider a draft resolution that is designed to protect the personal interests of the Palestinian representative's patron, rather than the legitimate rights of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians? Is not it time for us all to say to the Palestinian representative today, "Enough is enough"?

Delegates may not be aware of the exorbitant costs of this entirely superfluous session. This meeting alone will cost over $30,000. Each Security Council meeting in which action on this issue has been debated, considered and ultimately rejected has amounted to thousands and thousands of wasted monies. How can we possibly further the goals of reform in this Organization, let alone the goal of peace in the Middle East, if we continue in this way?

Pandering to the narrow agenda of the Palestinian representative not only fails to empower those genuinely committed to the cause of peace, but harms the reputation and credibility of the United Nations as a member of the Quartet and as a crucial voice in world affairs. The States Members of the United Nations must choose if they want to fill the Assembly's agenda with biased, divisive and outmoded issues, or if the Assembly will adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century. It cannot do both.

These kinds of resolutions may help perpetuate a corrupt and unaccountable regime, but they do nothing to help the Palestinians themselves. There is scarcely an Arab leader or a Palestinian in the street who will not admit, at least in confidence, that Mr. Arafat has not furthered the genuine welfare of the Palestinian people. Mr. Arafat's gain is the Palestinian people's loss.

Israel continues to hold out hope for a new Palestinian leadership that will live up to its obligations. We are committed to resolving this dispute through dialogue, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and, while obligated to protect our citizens against terrorism, we recognize that ultimately there is no military solution to this conflict. We remain committed, as we have proven before, to making painful compromises so as to realize the vision of Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in mutual dignity and security, but we cannot negotiate with those in the Palestinian leadership who are more devoted to destroying the Jewish State than to creating a democratic and vibrant Palestinian State. We cannot compromise with a leadership that hates us more than it loves its own children.

If we are to address the core issues of this conflict and move towards its peaceful settlement, we do not need more United Nations resolutions. We need, first and foremost, leaders on both sides who are committed to dialogue and mutual reconciliation. Mr. Arafat is no such leader.

Leadership not only confers rights; it imposes responsibilities. Leadership requires individuals that seek the betterment of their people and not the sole perpetuation of their own power and wealth. We know that there are such leaders in Palestinian society and, if freed from Mr. Arafat's grip, these leaders can rise to work with Israel to rescue the peace process and deliver a genuine solution. But if this plague of terrorism which has been nurtured for so long under Mr. Arafat's rule is not decisively stamped out, Palestinians and Israelis will continue to suffer. The promise of peace and prosperity will continue to be denied by those who value death more than they cherish life.

I urge the representatives in attendance today not to support this draft resolution and to oppose the continuing abuse of United Nations time and resources. If they really care about peace in the Middle East; if they truly care about the reputation and credibility of the United Nations; and if they care about the success of this fifty-eighth session, there should be no other option.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to address the General Assembly on this agenda item in my capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The resumption of the tenth emergency special session was warranted by the rapidly deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and, most recently, to the decision of the Government of Israel in principle to expel Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

At the Security Council meeting four days ago, an overwhelming majority of the speakers denounced the Israeli decision and urged that it be immediately

revoked. The appalling inability of the Security Council to exercise its responsibility under the United Nations Charter and to deal decisively with this issue has again brought us to the General Assembly in order to enable the United Nations to exercise its permanent responsibility over the question of Palestine.

The Committee has repeatedly called on the Israeli Government to lift the siege it has imposed on President Arafat. For many long months, President Arafat has been confined by the Israeli army to his headquarters, the muqataa, in Ramallah. The Palestinian people has been deprived of his leadership and guidance, especially at a time when Israeli army incursions, raids and extrajudicial killings have intensified.

The Israeli decision was unjustified and highly irresponsible. Senior Israeli officials have even explicitly said that killing President Arafat was one of the options in the implementation of this decision. The intent of this decision is an affront to the dignity of the Palestinian people and in no way helps to create a climate conducive to restarting peace negotiations.

The Committee is extremely worried that this decision, if implemented, would undoubtedly cause further fury among Palestinians, who are already enraged by the miserable conditions in which they live under continued Israeli occupation. The Committee calls on the Israeli Government to refrain from making any threatening statements, especially on President Arafat's personal safety. It should abide by international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The dismal situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is deeply alarming. The period of relative calm following the truce declaration by Palestinian groups in June was followed by deadly tit-for-tat violence last month. Our Committee's position in this regard is very clear and strong. While recognizing Israel's right to security, the Committee nevertheless condemns in the strongest terms the policy and practice of extrajudicial assassinations, emphasizing that such actions are inadmissible under international humanitarian law.

Similarly, the Committee condemns all attacks against Israeli civilians, whatever the provenance or motivation, as they have no moral justification and do not serve the cause of peace and reconciliation pursued by the Palestinian Authority. We believe that the primary cause for these actions, however, is the continuing occupation and lack of tangible progress in the political area.

The Israeli Government has made no significant move that would begin to improve the day-to-day lives of Palestinians. After a cursory lifting of some checkpoints and the release of some prisoners, it continues aggressively to expand its illegal settlements. We have voiced our concern about the construction of the separation wall. This illegal project is built not on the Green Line but on Palestinian land, choking livelihoods and effectively creating a ghetto-like situation for thousands of Palestinians. It prejudices the outcome of future permanent status negotiations and negates any possibility of establishing a contiguous Palestinian State.

The Committee calls on the international community, especially the principals of the Quartet, to do all they can to bridge this chasm and to regalvanize efforts to help the parties to return to negotiations and to push ahead with the peace process, with the road map as its guide. The road map remains the best way to proceed. It was accepted by the Palestinians. Its goals are clear and remain very relevant: an end to occupation; an end to terrorism and violence; a permanent settlement of the conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); and the realization of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders.

I call on members of this Assembly to send a clear message to the Government of Israel that it should recognize President Arafat as the true and legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. Any effort to expel or marginalize him does not contribute to the cause that we are all struggling for — the cause of peace.

I would like to say the following on behalf of Cuba.

Allow me to thank the President for reconvening the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly in order that, given the paralysis in the Security Council, Member States can take action, consider the situation and democratically express their opinions in the absence of the sort of authoritarian restriction of their right to freely express themselves — a restriction that does not even maintain the appearance of sovereign equality — that was recently in evidence

in a meeting devoted to the same issue that took place in the Council, that altogether undemocratic body whose own non-permanent members are even discriminated against.

About 3,600 people have died since September 2000 in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, almost 2,800 of them innocent Palestinian civilians. Deliberate extrajudicial executions are increasing. State terrorism, including the use of modern lethal weapons, is continuing. A wall is being built to create a Palestinian Bantustan. The Palestinian economy is being suffocated. The Palestinian Authority and its legitimate President continue to be under siege.

The Security Council continues to be immobilized by the veto of the United States, which to date has been employed 26 times to impede the implementation of that body's own resolutions, avoid the invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter and prevent the establishment of an international force to protect the unarmed Palestinian population.

There will be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East until there is an end to Israeli occupation; until the Palestinian people are able to exercise their legitimate right to establish an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem; until all occupied Arab territories are returned; until Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 border; until Israeli provocation in southern Lebanon comes to an end; until the return of Palestinian refugees is guaranteed; and until Israeli settlements are dismantled.

Cuba reiterates its condemnation of suicide bomb attacks against Israeli civilians, who continue to be the innocent victims of the spiral of violence generated by the policies of their Government. We also reject the manipulation of those individual acts to try to justify State terrorism and the atrocities perpetrated by an army possessing the most lethal and modern means.

The Cuban delegation reiterates the need to respect international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Cuba demands full respect for the physical integrity and dignity of President Yasser Arafat. We also demand that, given the obvious inability of the Security Council to carry out its functions, the General Assembly exercise the far-ranging and considerable powers entrusted to it by the Charter without vacillation or delay.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I wish to thank you the President for convening this urgent meeting. We are confident that he will be able to guide this meeting to a successful conclusion.

The Non-Aligned Movement has wholeheartedly supported the request of the Arab Group for a resumption of the tenth emergency special session. This meeting serves the important purpose of seeking just treatment at the United Nations vis-à-vis an important issue that concerns not only the Palestinian people, who have gone through unimaginable hardship, humiliation and indignity for far too long, but also the whole international community. We seek recourse from the General Assembly this morning under regrettable circumstances, in particular in the light of the failure of the Security Council to take urgent action in response to Israel's decision to expel President Arafat from the West Bank.

Speaking on its behalf, I clearly stated the position of the Non-Aligned Movement during the debate in the Security Council on 15 September 2003. I do not wish to repeat all of it today. The Non-Aligned Movement remains deeply disappointed at the outcome of the Security Council's consideration of the draft resolution that was introduced in that body. Unfortunately, the date 16 September 2003 has become another sad day, not only for Palestinians but also for all those who want to see peace emerge between Palestinians and Israelis. It became a sad day because the Council failed to send the correct signal to Israel. The draft resolution submitted to the Council demanded an end to the cycle of violence and called upon Israel to desist from any act of deportation and to cease making threats against the safety of President Arafat. Its adoption could have contributed to promoting further efforts to ensure the implementation of the road map. The Council could have acted decisively to nudge the peace process forward. Unfortunately, it could not do so. It therefore lost an important opportunity.

The Non-Aligned Movement has made clear its condemnation of violence and terrorism. We reiterate that the killing of innocent victims in this conflict is unacceptable, be they Israelis or Palestinians. But we are outraged at the intensification of Israeli occupation;

the wilful killing of civilians; extrajudicial executions; the destruction of homes, farmland and other property; the strangulation of the Palestinian economy; and the collective punishment and other practices committed deliberately and systematically against the Palestinian population. We are equally outraged at the continuation of settlement activities on Palestinian land and, at this particular moment, the building of the expansionist separation wall. That behaviour by Israel, particularly at a time when peace seems to be within grasp, calls into question Israel's own commitment to peace. What Israel is continuing to do, and what it has now promised to do to President Arafat, does not accord with the behaviour of a genuine partner in peaceful negotiations.

A clear attempt was made in the debate that took place in the Security Council, as is being done at this very moment in the General Assembly, to divert the focus from the urgent matter at hand to the issue of terrorism. President Arafat is portrayed as a terrorist, who must therefore be removed. He is also portrayed as the major obstacle to peace — again meaning that he should be removed or, if not removed, kept in isolation, diplomatically or physically. But the fact remains that President Arafat is the leader of the Palestinian people. Palestinians elected him democratically. To forcibly remove, expel, deport or, as some suggest, even kill him, would invite tragic consequences for Palestinians and Israelis alike, not to mention the peace process itself. We strongly condemn that decision and demand that Israel desist from any act of deportation and that it cease making threats on the safety of President Arafat.

The Non-Aligned Movement views the decision by the Israeli Cabinet as yet another prime example of Israel's wilful attempts to intimidate and dominate the Palestinian people, of its disregard for international opinion and of its contempt for international law. That provocative decision, and its implementation, would only worsen the situation and spark a greater cycle or violence. The Security Council failed to send that message to Israel. The General Assembly must now assume that responsibility. The decision to be taken by the General Assembly should not just constitute a message to Israel; it must also give hope to the people of Palestine and to all who long for peace in the area, in particular, Palestinians and Israelis. The General Assembly must uphold the rule of law since the Security Council failed to do so last week in response to this particular issue. Each and every Member of the United Nations has the obligation to ensure that the deprivation of the sovereign right of the Palestinian people would end immediately. Israel must be made to realize that it cannot continue to disregard international law while at the same time hoping for peace to be achieved. Eliminating the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people and the symbol of their struggle would not guarantee peace and security for Israel. It defies logic that the annihilation of the Palestinian leadership, political structure and government institutions could ever lead to peace, security and prosperity for Israel.

We must not lose sight of the fundamental cause of this violent conflict. The crux of it is not simply terrorism and its threat to Israel's security. It is in fact Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land and the continuing humiliation of the Palestinian people.

This is a conflict that has long been fuelled by 36 years of Israeli occupation and its systematic human rights violations and provocative policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel cannot justify its actions on the basis of combating terrorism.

We have heard accusations against President Arafat and the obstacle that he poses to the peace process. But, surely, we all know that what poses an obstacle to peace is not President Arafat. It is Israel's refusal to end the occupation, dismantle settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and renounce its expansionist policies for a greater Israel. In order for peace to be achieved, both sides must move and act accordingly. In that regard, we hope that members of the Quartet individually and collectively will undertake serious and bold efforts to assist the parties to arrive at a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to end the pain among Palestinians and Israelis alike.

As I did in the Security Council, I wish to state today that the Non-Aligned Movement is committed to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Movement firmly supports the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines. We believe that peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, national independence and the exercise of their sovereignty in their State, Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We call on Israel to come to its senses and accept the two-State solution as envisaged by Security

Council resolution 1397 (2002) and as promoted by the roadmap. Israel's acceptance of and commitment to the State of Palestine is the only way to ensure Israel's security. The continued Israeli occupation and harsh military action cannot be a viable solution. We are convinced that the imposition of Israeli policies and practices aimed at the destruction and devastation of the Palestinian society and the Palestinian Authority gravely undermines the peace process. Israel must be made to act in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law.

In that regard, we will continue to call for the revival of the roadmap and further intensive efforts by the Quartet and the parties concerned to bring the peace process back on track. We welcome the meeting of the Quartet principals in New York next week and look forward to concrete and promising results from that meeting.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the General Assembly has the obligation to discuss this issue. The issue is certainly not outmoded. The General Assembly should take a strong stand against any actions that could further undermine the peace process. It must give the signal that the international community has not abandoned the Palestinian people. It must show that the United Nations will continue to persevere in the implementation of the road map and the realization of the two-State vision. Our commitment to peace in the Middle East must not wane.

On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I urge members of the Assembly to give their overwhelming support to the draft resolution before us this morning.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This emergency special session of the General Assembly is taking place against the backdrop of the tragic situation in the Palestinian territories. Despite diplomatic efforts, Palestinian and Israeli relations have been plunged into a vicious cycle of violence, including terrorism and acts of retribution.

The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories has reached a critical point. We are forcefully confronted by the question as to what measures must be undertaken in order to finally extricate the Middle East peace process from this impasse. It is our conviction that this can be achieved only through continuing to draw up a shared political platform that would make it possible to ensure the unconditional implementation by the parties of their commitments under the road map drawn up by the Quartet of international mediators. That means that the terrorist raids against the Israeli civilian population, which Russia firmly condemns, must be ended. They undermine the prospects for the acquisition by the Palestinians of their independent State and home. They cannot be the means for achieving political objectives.

We call on the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority to undertake immediate measures to stop terrorist actions. The Israeli leadership must also implement its share of obligations under the roadmap. Once again, we emphasize the inadmissibility of the practice of extrajudicial executions and the disproportionate use of force and the need to refrain from unilateral steps that predetermine the outcome of negotiations regarding the ultimate status of the Palestinian territories.

We reaffirm our position that the implementation of the decision of the Government of Israel regarding the so-called removal of the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat, would be a serious political mistake, with the most negative consequences for the regional situation, and would lead to an uncontrollable course of events.

The Security Council's lack of readiness to adopt a resolution in connection with the exacerbation of Palestinian-Israeli confrontation reaffirms the need for more active international efforts aimed at surmounting the present crisis. There is clearly a need to exert greater pressure on the parties to implement their commitments under the roadmap. All possible courses of action must be agreed on by all of the parties involved and international mediators who can ensure control over the implementation of the roadmap.

The forthcoming meeting of the Quartet of international mediators, to be held at the foreign ministerial level, and including the Secretary-General, in New York, will be very important. We are counting on the fact that that meeting will conclude with specific results.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under your brilliant guidance, this session will achieve fruitful results. The Chinese side fully understands and supports the request by the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement to resume this session. We

hope that our meeting will produce positive results on the situation between Israel and Palestine.

The launch of the road map in June brought new opportunities and hopes to the peace process between Israel and Palestine. Recently, however, there have been serious disagreements between Israel and Palestine on the implementation of the road map, leading to a high degree of violence and a stalemate in the peace talks. The Chinese side is deeply concerned and disturbed about the increased tension in the Middle East. It is our hope that Israel and Palestine will cherish the results of the peace talks since the launch of the road map, put an end to the violent clashes and refrain from taking any acts that will lead to further deterioration of the situation.

President Yasser Arafat is the legitimate leader elected by the Palestinian people. Israel's decision to expel him will not help reduce the tension but will only serve to deepen the hatred between the two sides. We urge the Israeli Government to reconsider this decision. In our view, both Israel and Palestine should adhere to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace and continue to engage in peace talks. It is the only way to end the three-year violent cycle, remove the roots of violent activities, appropriately settle disputes between the two sides and realize peaceful coexistence.

The settlement of the Israel-Palestine issue bears on peace and stability of the entire Middle Eastern region and the whole world. The international community should therefore make even greater efforts to exert a positive influence and accelerate the Middle Eastern peace process. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China always upholds justice in this question and has made active efforts to promote that peace process at various stages. China, alongside with the rest of the international community, is ready to continue to play a constructive role in bringing long-term stability to the Middle East.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Mr. President, my delegation is proud to serve under you as President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We wish to extend our congratulations to you, our sisters and brothers in the Caribbean, on the assumption of this important position.

I also would like to bring to your attention that I associate myself with the statement that was given on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by its Chairman, the Ambassador of Malaysia.

It is early in your presidency, Sir, and already we come before you to express ourselves on the situation in the Middle East. Unless the international community takes immediate measures to stabilize the situation, we are heading for a serious catastrophe.

It has been over a year since this emergency special session of the General Assembly was last convened. On that occasion we endorsed the remarks contained in the Secretary-General's report on the massacre in the Jenin refugee camp concerning the urgent need for the parties to resume a process that would lead back to the negotiating table. But that did not seem to change the situation at all.

The greatest difficulty we face is that the Security Council has not succeeded in discharging its responsibilities to address the Middle East issue. The Security Council is mandated to deal with matters of international peace and security. But when it comes to the Middle East the Council has been unable to enforce its own resolutions. This has left the Israeli military with the mistaken impression that it has the green light to take action against Palestinian civilians. At the same time, it has allowed armed Palestinian groups to retaliate against Israeli civilians. Failure by the Security Council to act decisively has given those opposed to a peaceful solution the mandate to determine the agenda.

The Israelis and Palestinians cannot hope to approach a solution for peace by continuing to kill each other. The South African Government has always stated that violence as a tactic or strategy will never deliver the peace so dearly sought by the people of Palestine and Israel.

More worrisome are the reports that the Israeli Cabinet has taken a decision to expel and perhaps even kill President Yasser Arafat, the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people. The fact that President Arafat embodies Palestinian identity and national aspirations has been lost in the hatred that has engulfed the Middle East. The South African Government is on record as condemning all acts of violence, particularly against innocent civilians.

During the past year a clear opportunity to advance the peace process presented itself in the form of the Quartet's road map. It brought the Palestinians

and the Israelis to the point where they could begin to talk about a common and peaceful future. The road map created opportunities for confidence-building among the parties. This culminated in a ceasefire, which raised the hope that the parties could make use of the relative calm to advance the political process.

Tragically, that opportunity was lost. Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, explained in his statement before the Security Council on 15 September 2003:

> "The principle of parallelism, reciprocal steps by both parties in all fields, is a core concept of the road map. The weakness of the past four months of half-hearted implementation by both sides is that parallelism was not emphasized. As a result, a single but essential issue — security of the Israelis from terrorism — became the sole focus of the road map implementation." (S/PV.4824, p. 5)

It seems that the only meaningful way out of this dilemma is for international pressure to be brought to bear on both sides to honour their commitments. The Government of Israel has to immediately stop the extrajudicial killings and dismantle settlements and the separation wall, as well as to rescind its decision to expel or even consider taking the life of President Arafat.

If the Security Council is to be seen as remaining seized with the Middle East, it should immediately adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter calling for a complete cessation of all acts of violence, terror, provocation, incitement and destruction. Such a Chapter VII resolution should also demand that Israel, as the occupying Power, abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War. In particular, the Security Council needs to place on record the fact that threats to deport or kill leaders of the Palestinian people are unacceptable and illegal, as is the construction of the separation wall on Palestinian land. Furthermore, the Council should mandate the deployment of an international presence to monitor the implementation of the Chapter VII resolution by both sides.

Such decisive action by the Security Council will send a signal to all parties in the Middle East that the international community is determined to stop this threat to international peace and security.

As long as the Security Council passes resolutions that are not enforced, the forces of violence in the Middle East will always believe that they can determine the agenda.

The role of the General Assembly is crucial in the debate on the Middle East. This Assembly is the only forum where Member States all have an equal opportunity to speak out on the Middle East. We believe that our presence here is extremely important. We are speaking about people's lives: Palestinian lives and Israeli lives. Those lives are too important for us to remain quiet.

The suggestion that this debate must be quantified in terms of United Nations resources is shocking to us. If the General Assembly cannot find time to discuss the Middle East, what other issue of global security and importance will we discuss? We in South Africa are celebrating ten years of independence next year because the General Assembly, for more than 46 years, gave time for the issue of apartheid to be discussed. We will never agree that the General Assembly must start quantifying debates on money, especially on an important issue such as the Middle East.

The struggle for self-determination by the Palestinian people for a State of their own, existing side by side with the State of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, is what we are committed to supporting. We are convinced that there will never be peace in the Middle East until that materializes. As my Government has stated many times, the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East is through dialogue and not violence.

For those reasons, my delegation urges that we support the resolution before the Assembly, introduced by the group of Arab States and endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): On Monday, Security Council members and United Nations Member States listened to the testimony by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen and agreed with him that the international community must take steps to revive the road map. We all know the provisions in the road map. But let me quote from three of them in particular:

> "A rebuilt and refocused Palestinian Authority security apparatus begins sustained, targeted and effective operations aimed at confronting all those engaged in terror and dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure."

This includes commencing confiscation of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.

> "This includes commencing confiscation of illegal weapons and consolidation of security authority, free of association with terror and corruption."

A second point:

> "The Government of Israel takes no actions undermining trust, including deportations, attacks on civilians; confiscation and/or demolition of Palestinian homes and property, as a punitive measure or to facilitate Israeli construction; destruction of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure; and other measures specified in the Tenet work plan."

Those are all provisions contained in the road map. A third and last point, to quote from the road map:

> "Arab States cut off public and private funding and all other forms of support for groups supporting and engaging in violence and terror."

The United States delegation believes that we have no other option at this time. We must devote our efforts and energy to making the road map work.

Secretary Powell has stated that the United States does not support either the elimination of Mr. Arafat or his forced exile, and this remains our policy. In our view, the draft resolutions we have considered at the United Nations this week are flawed in their lack of balance because they single out Israel and ignore the groups whose aim it is to sabotage the road map. We oppose these draft resolutions because of their imbalance and omission of the elements that we have spelled out: a condemnation of acts of terrorism, an explicit condemnation of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and a call for the dismantlement of the infrastructure that supports those terrorist operations.

It is particularly disheartening that this pattern of one-sided recriminations at the United Nations has begun again just days before the general debate and a ministerial-level meeting of the Quartet, which is scheduled to take place later this month. I regret that the United Nations will not send a positive and unified message to support the peace process at the start of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. That polarization undermines our collective diplomatic efforts to make some headway on these issues here or with the parties on the ground. We have a responsibility to try to convince both parties to return to negotiations that will lead to peace in the Middle East. We have already spelled out how this could work in the road map. Instead of reflexively calling for emergency special sessions, let us get down to the business of working for peace.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is my first statement, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly and wish you every success in all our deliberations, and especially for a constructive outcome to the Assembly's deliberations in support of the work of the United Nations.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to affirm before the Assembly that the Government of my country has clearly expressed its position with respect to measures of expulsion against the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat. That position is expressed in the communiqué that I shall now read out.

> "The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shares with members of the international community, who are committed to peace efforts in the Middle East, its immense concern at the threat that the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat, might be expelled from his natural and legal environment for the exercise of his functions as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It is our hope that in the name of lasting peace and security of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, such measures will not be implemented. The exclusion or isolation of the parties to the conflict is a step backwards in the efforts and initiatives for peace and reconciliation.
>
> "The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its position regarding the Palestinian problem, respecting the rights of both parties and

supporting the efforts of the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and to avoid violence, tension and political instability in the region. The Government of Venezuela calls for continuing the process of peace negotiations, in implementation of the agreements already reached: the road map."

At the same time, I would like to reaffirm the position taken by the delegation of Venezuela last year during the meeting of the ministers for foreign affairs of the Group of 77 presided over by Minister for Foreign Affairs Roy Chaderton-Matos. On that occasion we said,

"In the context of globalization and growing interdependence, we believe that only through dialogue and cooperation will we be able to find formulas to resolve international conflict. We are concerned about the worsening of age-old conflicts — conflicts that are no less urgent because longstanding — which deserve our fullest attention. In this regard, we would like to reaffirm the provisions of Security Council resolutions that invite the parties to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to recognize the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States of the region and their right to live in peace within secure borders, free from the threat or use of force."

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): On behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) group in the United Nations, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having resumed the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

The announcement by the Israelis of their intention to expel President Arafat from the Palestinian territory is clearly the latest attempt on their part to preclude any efforts aimed at restoring Palestinian rights. A review of the trajectory of activities in recent months reveals clearly that the current Israeli regime is evidently intent on either nipping any new idea in the bud or ensuring its failure during the course of implementation. That is in line with Mr. Sharon's long and unwavering record of ferociously opposing any kind of peace with the Palestinians that might lead to the restoration of their rights, including the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State.

In the past several months, contrary to Israeli commitments, the building of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory has not stopped, let alone been reversed and the results of the policy undone. Instead, the Israelis displaced a number of mobile homes in a few newly-set-up outposts in the West Bank, while continuing relentlessly with settlement building.

Disregard and tokenism by the Israelis, as well as a policy of deception, has applied in other areas, too. The release of the Palestinian prisoners, the retreat of the Israeli army from the Palestinian territory, the ending of the strangulation policy of the populated Palestinian areas and the easing of tight closures and curfew regulations have yet to be carried out.

More importantly, despite the ceasefire declared by the Palestinian groups, the Israelis never stopped their armed aggression. Their bloody campaign against the Palestinians, including their criminal policy of extrajudicial executions, continued unabated. In that way they tried wittingly to antagonize the Palestinians and induce them to respond in kind, thus precipitating the failure of the road map. The Israeli decision to kill or expel President Arafat is a continuation of their general policy aimed at defeating any peace initiative and continuing to keep their grip on the Palestinian land.

It is regrettable that once again last week — and for the thirty-sixth time — the United States resorted to the veto in order to block the passage of a draft resolution, which would have criticized the Israeli regime for its crime against the Palestinians and urged the Israelis not to deport President Arafat. It is not acceptable for the Security Council to become paralysed with regard to a grave crisis that is at the top of the list of international priorities. The whole world — and especially the people in the Middle East — is bewildered about the extent of the double standard and the selectivity with which the different issues on the agenda of the Security Council are being dealt with.

The expulsion of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority would be a flagrant crime. It would plunge the area into another round of violence and represent a deliberate attempt to strike another blow at any hope for a genuine peace. The international community, especially the Quartet, should live up to its responsibility and prevent the Israelis from continuing to flout its will. We believe that the General Assembly

should do whatever is in its power to prevent the Israelis from carrying out their decision. In this respect, the States members of the OIC support the draft resolution before the General Assembly and urge States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of it.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your outstanding election to preside over the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's readiness to cooperate with you, and to express our appreciation to you for having organized this debate in plenary meeting to discuss the serious and worrying events taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The acceptance of the road map by Israel and the Palestinian Authority had given rise to the hope that the region of the Middle East, and Palestine in particular, would once again find itself on the road to peace, stability and development. Unfortunately, the respite was all too short. The decision in principle of the Israel Cabinet to expel the President of the Palestinian Authority from Ramallah, and even to threaten his life, brought about a revival of the cycle of violence, suicide attacks and reprisals that are once again plunging the entire region into an abyss and threatening to annihilate the Quartet's peace plan.

My delegation feels that this decision is a serious political error with unpredictable consequences and that it cannot be tolerated. The international community must act here and now to stop the deterioration of the peace process and to work with ever greater determination and unity to relaunch the dialogue between Israel and Palestine. Action by our Assembly must include the adoption of the draft resolution submitted for our consideration. This is a message of encouragement to peace and to respect of commitments undertaken by the parties and by the international community, within the framework of the implementation of the road map.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, is concerned about respect for international law and wishes to recall that President Yasser Arafat is the embodiment of the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people for its self-determination. We also wish to reaffirm our unshakeable conviction that the States of the region, including the State of Israel and an eventual Palestinian State, have the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Guinea will therefore continue to urge all the parties and the international community to work for the effective and rapid resumption of the peace process in order to conclude a definitive and peaceful political settlement. It is our hope that the meeting of the Quartet planned for next week in New York will contribute, through the adoption of vigorous decisions, to providing a new impetus for the road map and to promoting the swift advent of an era of peace, freedom and prosperity in a spirit of unity in the Middle East and Palestine.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Against the background of Israel's escalated military attack on Palestine, on 10 September the Israeli cabinet adopted a decision to expel Palestinian President Arafat and it was said that Israeli Prime Minister Sharon instructed the military to work out a detailed operation for his expulsion.

Israel's decision to expel Arafat, the President legitimately elected by the Palestinian people, is a wanton violation of the sovereignty of Palestine and is international terrorism defying international law and practices. This rash act frustrated once again the expectations of people the world over who long for a peaceful solution of Palestinian question.

The responsibility, which again put the Palestinian question at risk of being embroiled in an evil cycle of violence, lies entirely on the side of Israel, an occupying Power. The cause of Palestinian and other Arab peoples of recovering their human rights and right to self-determination is justifiable. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea hopes that Israel will revoke its decision to expel President Arafat and pull out of the occupied territories and that the cause of founding a Palestinian State headed by Arafat will be achieved at an early date.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also takes this opportunity to extend its full support and solidarity to the struggle of Arab peoples for a fair solution of the problem of the Middle East.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, and the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

The European Union expresses its deep concern over the dangerously deteriorated situation. Our priority is to call on the two parties to exert maximum restrain, to stop the violence and to respect their obligations to continue the implementation of the Quartet road map.

The presidency and the European Union member States express their strong condemnation of the decision in principle by Israel to expel the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and rally their support for the Security Council call on the Government of Israel made on 12 September not to implement it. The European Union has already clearly voiced its opposition to any forceful action against the duly-elected President of the Palestinian Authority and urged the Israeli authorities to refrain from any such action. The European Union believes that the Israeli decision is a serious mistake and adds further tension, undermining any negotiated solution of the ongoing conflict. The European Union regrets that the Security Council was not able to adopt a resolution by consensus.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens. Such attacks obstruct the efforts of the international community to restore peace in the region and damage the interests of the Palestinian people. The European Union considers the authors of these acts to be enemies of peace. It strongly urges the Palestinian Authority to take all necessary concrete measures against those terrorist organizations that are opposed to any political dialogue and undermine every effort to restore hope and to bring peace, security and better conditions of life to the region.

It is in this context that the European Union has inserted the political branch of Hamas into the European list of terrorist organizations. The European Union renews the call made by the Thessaloniki European Council upon all Palestinian organizations to declare immediately an unconditional ceasefire. The European Union recalls also that the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council called on Israel to abstain from any punitive measures, including extrajudicial killings, and to act in accordance with international law.

The European Union reaffirms the strategic importance of the Palestinian Authority as a partner for peace. The European Union has strongly emphasized that the new designated Prime Minister, Ahmed Qurei, must rapidly form a new Palestinian Government that is empowered to act decisively on the priorities of the fight against terrorism, the efforts to relaunch the peace process with Israel in the framework of the Quartet road map and the continuation of the Palestinian Authority's political and economic reforms without any further delay.

The European Union strongly believes that, in order to achieve a lasting, just and peaceful settlement of the conflict and a comprehensive peace in the region, including Syria and Lebanon, there is no alternative to the speedy implementation in good faith by the two sides of the Quartet road map, which contains clear timelines for the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, and for the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations.

It is in that regard that the European Union has urged both parties to take the following measures. The Palestinian Authority should form a new Government, reorganize its security forces under the control of the new Prime Minister, re-establish public order, undertake visible efforts to dismantle terrorist organizations, implement the reforms already started and, in due time, organize free and transparent elections.

The Israeli Government should withdraw its army from autonomous areas, put an end to targeted killings, provide relief to the Palestinian people by lifting the roadblocks and the other restrictions imposed upon them and freeze all settlement activities and the building of the security wall, which is a course of action that jeopardizes reaching a political solution to the conflict.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to the peace process, in order that those measures be effectively implemented. It also emphasizes the need for determined and coordinated action by the international community. The European Union is maintaining close contacts with all the parties involved. The Union believes that the upcoming ministerial meeting of the Quartet in New York will, as provided for in the road map, be the appropriate forum to assess the performance of the parties vis-à-vis the implementation of the plan, as well as to decide upon the further steps needed to ensure effective and credible monitoring in the field.

The President: At the request of delegations, it is my intention to suspend the meeting for 15 minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 12.50 p.m. and was resumed at 1.55 p.m.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

After intensive and very constructive consultations with the sponsors, whom I sincerely thank for their flexibility and approach for the sake of the common interest of peace and security, I would like to propose, on behalf of the European Union, the following amendments to the draft resolution entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". I will read the third preambular paragraph, as amended. The text should read as follows.

> "*Reiterating its grave concern* at the tragic and violent events that have taken place since September 2000, which have caused enormous suffering and many innocent victims throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel".

Furthermore, we propose to insert the following new preambular paragraphs following the third preambular paragraph. The new two paragraphs that I will read will be the new fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs. The fourth preambular paragraph reads as follows,

> "*Condemning* the suicide bombings and the recent intensification, and recalling in that regard that, in the framework of the roadmap, the Palestinian Authority has to take all necessary measures to end violence and terror."

The fifth preambular paragraph reads as follows,

> "*Deploring* the extrajudicial killings and the recent escalation, and underlining that they are a violation of international law and international humanitarian law and compromise the efforts to relaunch the peace process and must be stopped."

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution. I should like to thank the European Union for the serious and fruitful effort it made during the negotiations on this draft resolution. In a spirit of compromise and common endeavour in this Hall, I would like to say that we approve the amendments proposed by the European Union.

The President: Before we proceed further, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.12, as orally amended. Since document A/ES-10/L.12 has been circulated in the Hall only earlier in the day, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provisions of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which read as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to a vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to consider draft resolution A/ES-10/L.12.

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/ES-10/L.12, as orally amended. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): We will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Assembly. We have already aligned ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union, which emphasizes our shared concerns about the dangerously deteriorating situation in the Middle East.

We have consistently denounced all acts of terrorism and violence. We intensely believe that there can be no rightful cause to justify terrorism. Yet, dealing with terrorism should not lead to further violence. It is now more urgent than ever that the parties to the conflict should start sincerely fulfilling the obligations they have undertaken under the road map, which also addresses the eradication of terrorism.

There is ample evidence that the process of ensuring security cannot be decoupled from the political process itself. This conflict should no longer

be allowed to force its yoke on the peoples of the region. The tragic cycle of violence robs all generations of a brighter future. Unfortunately, this debilitating effect is being felt across the entire region. It is therefore the responsibility of both parties and the international community to regain the confidence and trust that will open the way for a just and lasting solution to this question. The deportation of an elected leader will not serve the imperatives of that objective.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): Let me first convey my delegation's warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency. My delegation looks forwards to working with you and your administration over the next 12 months.

The delegation of Nauru will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution under consideration. The delegation considers that both parties to the conflict are correct: correct in their desire for peace and security for their people. But both are also wrong: wrong in the ways and means they are deploying their efforts to achieve their desired goals.

Hence, Nauru will not be placed in a position to decide who is right and who is wrong. Our desire is to see a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and both sides must do what is necessary to allow the peace process under the road map to take root so that it will grow into a tree that will bear fruit for the children of Abraham in the years to come.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution A/ES-10/L.12, as orally amended.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Bangladesh, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Morocco.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Nauru, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Tonga, Tuvalu

The draft resolution, as orally amended, was adopted by 133 votes to 4, with 15 abstentions (resolution ES-10/12).

[Subsequently the delegations of Malawi and Zambia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Chile has unequivocally condemned the decision announced by the Government of Israel to remove the President of the Palestinian Authority from the occupied territories. Such a measure does not contribute to peace in the Middle East. It is an assault on the dignity of a people and its Authority, legitimately constituted on the basis of a democratic process.

Chile certainly condemns all acts of terrorism, whatever their origin. The loss of innocent lives — whether Palestinian or Israeli — deserves the same degree of repudiation on our part.

We regret that the Security Council was not united around the draft resolution in question. We voted in favour of the resolution just adopted, given the changes in the text that had generated broader support within the General Assembly.

We believe that the Palestinian-Israeli problem will be resolved only with perseverance and patience at the negotiating table. Every effort must be made in the days ahead with a view to resuming the peace negotiations within the context of international legality, in strict compliance with United Nations resolutions and in accordance with commitments solemnly entered into at the Aqaba Summit, so as to ensure the effective implementation of the Quartet's road map. The people of Palestine and of Israel deserve to live in peace within free, sovereign and secure States.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala): We join the appeal of the international community for a halt to the relentless cycle of violence into which the Middle East has fallen. We deplore the deaths of so many innocent people in Israel and in the occupied territories. We consider terrorist attacks against civilians to be repugnant. But neither can we sanction extrajudicial executions as a method for responding to such attacks. It is clear to us that specific, reciprocal and parallel steps are required by both parties if they are to draw back from the edge of the precipice to more secure ground. We therefore support the efforts of the Quartet to revive the road map, or whatever may take its place. In order to avoid still greater polarization, however, we abstained from voting on the resolution under consideration today.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru is strongly in favour of an end to all acts of violence, including acts of terrorism, as set out in the resolution. We also agree that acts of deportation cannot be tolerated, and we support all efforts that the Quartet might undertake to ensure that the parties to the conflict comply with the provisions of the road map. However, we abstained on the vote because the resolution contained no clear-cut denunciation of suicide attacks as acts of terrorism that should be repudiated.

I should like to remind the Assembly that Peru endured acts of terrorism itself. We should also like to recall that — although it was not linked to the subject of the resolution — it was a suicide attack that took the life of Sergio Vieira de Mello and other United Nations staff members barely one month ago.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada): There is much in the resolution that Canada supports, including the demand on both Israel and the Palestinians to implement their obligations in accordance with the road map. Canada also shares the international community's opposition to the potential actions by Israel against the President of the Palestinian Authority. Extrajudicial killings violate international law and cannot be condoned. The establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements and the construction of a security fence within the occupied Palestinian territories undermine the hopes of Palestinians and prejudice prospects for a fair-minded peace.

The resolution, however, does not proceed from a fair or accurate assessment of the security situation facing Israelis. Insufficient attention is paid in it to the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority to take all necessary measures to stop terrorism and incitement. The Palestinian Authority must meaningfully and immediately address the ongoing perpetration of heinous acts of terrorism by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and others. Violence is not a path to a Palestinian State. The resolution does not reflect that reality, and for those reasons Canada abstained on the vote.

Mr. Haneda (Japan): Japan has been strongly urging the Israeli Government not to go forward with its decision to remove Chairman Arafat. At the same time, it is our position that the Palestinian Authority must take immediate action against the extreme factions, and strengthen its security apparatus. While the amended text does not include explicit language to this effect, it implies, as a whole, such action by the Palestinian side. We therefore voted in favour of the resolution. It is of the utmost importance that both the

Israeli and Palestinian side restore calm to the situation immediately, resume their dialogue and cooperation in accordance with the road map, exercise the utmost restraint and exert maximum effort in order to bring the violence to a halt.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic voted in favour of the resolution just adopted because we are convinced that the United Nations has a responsibility to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem and to protect the Palestinian people and its leadership against Israeli attempts to remove them from their homeland.

Furthermore, we voted in favour of the resolution because it sends a clear signal from the international community that Israeli practices, foremost among them the continuation of the occupation by Israel of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, are the primary reason for the current events in the region. The Israeli policy of building colonial settlements in the occupied Arab territories is also illegal under international law and United Nations resolutions and must be brought to an end.

Syria's vote in favour of the resolution was also based on the fact that the actions by the Palestinians are merely a reaction to Israel's continuing occupation and practice of building colonial settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories; Israel's committing of war crimes and carrying out of State-sponsored acts of terrorism. We regret that some did not mention that form of terrorism as practised by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, its persistence in committing war crimes on a daily basis by carrying out political targeted assassinations of Palestinian leaders or its continuing construction of the apartheid separation wall.

This disappoints and frustrates the Palestinians and robs them of any hope of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. All those who can see things for what they are can see that Israel does not want peace in the region, which has suffered for many decades as a result of this Israeli racist attitude, tainted by colonialism and expansionism.

Syria's vote in favour of the resolution does not signal its approval of the references in the preamble that condemn the Palestinian side while failing adequately and clearly to condemn the Israeli practices. Syria notes its reservations to those preambular references. Syria reaffirms its commitment to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the Madrid terms of reference; the land for peace formula; and the initiative adopted by the Arab Summit in Beirut. Nevertheless, we stress that the achievement of that goal will require Israel to cease its practices forthwith; to demonstrate the genuine will to achieve peace in the region on the basis of an end to its occupation of the occupied territories; and to reverse its current settler colonialist policy.

We look forward to receiving the assistance of countries of the world in striving tirelessly to bring Israel's practices and its occupation of Arab territories to an end. That is the only way to achieve peace, for which all of us in the United Nations yearn and strive.

Mr. Mekel (Israel): Several days ago, after the Security Council considered the draft Palestinian resolution and rejected it, Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying that such resolutions are of little importance anyway. Today, no doubt, he will change his tune.

I will not repeat our comments in the debate today, but I will say that the resolution adopted today will not bring Israelis and Palestinians closer to peace or enhance the role and reputation of the United Nations.

This conflict is fundamentally about the refusal of the Palestinian leadership under Mr. Arafat's control to recognize and accept the right of the Jewish people to self-determination side by side with their Arab and Palestinian neighbours. That is why no peace deal has been or ever will be good enough for Mr. Arafat. That is the message sent when innocent men, women and children are blown to pieces in pizza parlours and cafés and on commuter buses due to Mr. Arafat's own acts and omissions. To suggest that these horrific suicide bombings should be equated with Israel's defensive actions against illegal combatants, as the resolution effectively does, does not show diplomatic evenhandedness. It exposes moral blindness.

Israel voted against the resolution because the peace process and road map will not be advanced by this kind of one-sided text or by coming to the defence of a man who has done more than anyone else to bury the chance for peace. We believe that many representatives in the Hall know this and we regret that

some have not had the courage of their convictions to vote with their conscience.

The Palestinian representative and his patron, Mr. Arafat, have gained another peace of paper today. The Palestinian and Israeli peoples, who yearn for and deserve peace, have, I fear, gained very little. The Palestinian representative spoke of insanity. What is insane is that, rather than focus on improving the reality on the ground and on fighting terrorism — as the Assembly is legally and morally obligated to do so that we can move towards peace — we are devoting more time and resources to pandering to Palestinian initiatives. In our view, the United Nations credibility and the prospects for peace are only harmed by this approach.

We, the State of Israel, look forward to better days than this for the United Nations.

Mr. Kronfol (Lebanon): My delegation would like to make the following statement in Arabic.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Lebanon's vote in favour of the resolution just adopted was an expression of its support for the legitimate demands of the Palestinians, a people whose land is occupied and who are the victims of injustice at the hands of the occupying Israeli forces. This vote does not imply Lebanon's agreement with certain elements of the resolution's preamble that fail clearly and fully to condemn Israel's daily crimes against the Palestinian people.

The adoption of this resolution today, recalling the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, is yet further proof of the international community's conviction that the principal obstacle to the achievement of peace in the Middle East is Israel's ongoing occupation of the Arab territories.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Our position on this matter is well known. We reaffirmed it recently in the Security Council.

The resumption of violence compromises the implementation of the road map, as do the myriad threats against the elected President of the Palestinian Authority and spokesman for the Palestinian people, Yasser Arafat. We stress the need for all parties to accept one another. Any solution that fails to recognize the need for dialogue is a road to nowhere.

We therefore appeal to all parties to demonstrat restraint and responsibility and to learn the lessons o history and, finally, together, to build peace in th Middle East. That peace requires the establishment of Palestinian State and its coexistence with an Israel State that must, in turn, enjoy secure an internationally recognized borders and be able to liv in safety. We reiterate our appeal to both parties t create conditions necessary to a resumption of constructive dialogue.

Cameroon, while believing in the need to protec the physical and moral integrity of Palestinia President Arafat, abstained in the voting earlie because the amendments to the initial text, on whic we had received instructions, added a new dimensio to the draft on which we would have required furthe consultations with our capital.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cub has a tradition of offering unrestrained support for th legitimate positions taken by the Arab countries and b the Palestinian Authority in particular. We believe tha the European Union's imposition of its amendment whereby extrajudicial executions are merely deplore but suicide bombings are condemned — an amendmen on whose inclusion the European Union's support wa conditional — was an act of profound hypocris reflecting one reason why there has been no progress i the peace process.

The delegation of Cuba profoundly regrets tha the General Assembly should refer to such a crimina act of State terrorism as extrajudicial killing merely t deplore it. This also demonstrates the extent of th hypocrisy in the global fight against terrorism.

The President: We have heard the last speaker i explanation of vote after the voting.

I now call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): W wish, on behalf of the Palestinian people an leadership, to express our heartfelt thanks to th Assembly for supporting today's resolution and fo having adopted it by such an overwhelming majority Naturally, we give particular thanks to our brothers i the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement and t the countries that sponsored the resolution an submitted it to the General Assembly at its resume tenth emergency special session.

We also appreciate the efforts made by the European Union and its presidency to arrive at an agreement with the sponsors of the resolution. We feel that the amendment proposed by the European Union was insufficiently balanced, but in the current circumstances we were nevertheless able to accede to it. We reiterate our appreciation to the European Union and its members.

Regrettably, it would seem that, for an extremely limited number of Member States, the issue is not about texts or language, but about other factors that, quite frankly, we do not fully understand. The efforts made and the fact that we managed to agree on the amendments to the resolution demonstrate once again that no serious effort to achieve a similar consensus in the Security Council was ever made.

The main question before the General Assembly is of extreme importance. It was necessary for the international community, as represented by this important Assembly, to take a clear position on this subject. That is precisely what it did. We hope that the Israeli Government will understand this clear position and commit itself to it, despite the fact that the words we heard a few minutes ago point to an unchanged Israeli position, contemptuous of the international will and rejecting the resolutions of the United Nations and international law. It is our hope that the international community will be able in the future to enforce respect for its resolutions by the occupying Power.

I reiterate our thanks to you personally, Sir, and to all the countries that have participated in this meeting, in particular those that voted in favour of today's important resolution.

The President: The tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly is now adjourned in accordance with the terms of paragraph 4 of the resolution adopted at the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 2.40 p.m.